

Money Follows the Person Housing Bridge Assistance Program Policy

Overview:

The Money Follows the Person Housing Bridge Assistance Program has been established utilizing short-term housing assistance, one-time only funding, appropriated by the Montana Legislature for SFY 2014 and SFY 2015. These funds were specifically appropriated to provide financial assistance for housing for persons transitioning from Medicaid-funded, facility-based care into a home and community based settings through the Montana Community Choice Partnership Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration Program. This temporary housing subsidy is designed to assist MFP participants with their housing payments until they are eligible to utilize a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) or are eligible for another type of rental assistance.

The Housing Bridge Assistance Program has established a monthly fund to provide monthly housing assistance for MFP participants. The number of persons served will vary depending on the amount of assistance needed by each participant in consideration of the total funding that has been authorized. The Housing Bridge Assistance Program will mirror the local Public Housing Authority (PHA)/Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rules for maximum rent (Payment Standard) and 30% of monthly income for rental share. Approved payments are based on the Payment Standards set by the State of Montana Housing Division Section 8 Program for each of the fifty six counties. The applicable standard will be applied for the county in which the MFP participant chooses to live. Montana's Payment Standards can be found at <http://housing.mt.gov/About/Section8/s8docs.mcp>.

The payment standard used shall be that for:

- A one-bedroom unit, or
- A proportionate share of rental costs in living units containing more than one bedroom.
- Assistance for the rent is equal to the rent paid or the maximum allowable rent (if less), minus 30 percent of the gross income of the individual consumer.

Eligibility:

In order to be considered for the Housing Bridge Assistance Program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- The applicant must be a participant in the Montana Community Choice Partnership Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration Program.
- The applicant will meet the financial and other eligibility requirements of the local Public Housing Authority for a HCV or other rental assistance programs in the community where the transition will occur. (Income and income exclusions for the Housing Bridge Assistance Program will mirror the local PHA or rental assistance program guidelines).
- The applicant will apply for and be on the waiting list for a HCV through their local PHA and other rental assistance programs in the community where the transition will occur.
- The applicant will provide signed confirmation by the PHA or other rental assistance programs for which he/she is on the waiting list.
- The applicant shall be financially responsible for their portion of rent or any additional costs.
- The applicant must move into MFP qualified housing as follows:
 - Home owned or leased;

- Apartment with individual lease, secure access, as well as living, sleeping, bathing and cooking areas over which you or your family has control;

Application Process:

- The Regional Transition Coordinator (a person who will assist the participant in transition) and the MFP participant will complete the MFP Housing Bridge Assistance Program application and provide evidence that the applicant has applied for a HCV through the local PHA and other local rental assistance programs and is on the waiting list(s).
- Application Requests for the MFP Housing Bridge Assistance Program will be made by the Regional Transition Coordinator and submitted to the MFP Housing Coordinator (Brian Barnes, email: bbarnes@mt.gov) for approval.
- The applicant will be prescreened for the Housing Choice Voucher Program by the Montana Department of Commerce Housing Division Section 8 Program to ensure eligibility for the Housing Choice Voucher and other subsidized housing.
- Upon approval of the application, the unit will be inspected to make sure it meets Housing Quality Standards (HQS) if the unit is intended to be used with a Housing Choice Voucher beyond the temporary housing bridge assistance. A HQS inspector contracted by the Department of Commerce Housing Division will perform the inspection.
- The MFP Housing Coordinator will establish a wait list for the MFP Housing Bridge Assistance Program, if needed.

Conditions:

- MFP Housing Bridge Assistance will continue until the Housing Choice Voucher or other rental assistance program becomes available. At such time, housing bridge assistance will end.
- If the tenant is evicted MFP Housing Bridge Assistance ends.
- If a participant withdraws from services or if services are no longer necessary, MFP Housing Bridge Assistance ends.
- MFP Housing Bridge Assistance can only be assured for housing payments up to 6/1/2015 which covers through 6/30/2015. The one-time only legislative appropriation ends 6/30/2015.
- If the participant is unable to secure a Housing Choice Voucher or any other type of subsidized housing before 7/1/2015, they will be liable for the full portion of the rent beginning 7/1/2015. Applicants and Regional Transition Coordinators will be informed of this beforehand and must sign the Money Follows the Person Housing Bridge Assistance Program Application acknowledging the cutoff date.
- The discontinuation for payment will be reviewed and approved by the MFP Project Director.

Rent Payment Process:

- An applicant, in coordination with the Regional Transition Coordinator, is responsible for finding a qualified unit. Transition Coordinators can use the following website to help search for housing: <http://www.mthousingsearch.com/index.html>
- The property owner and/or landlord will establish the lease, enforce its provisions, and collect the monthly rent.
- The MFP Housing Bridge Assistance Program pays the property owner and/or landlord directly via an invoice to the MFP Program for the difference between the market rent price and the

amount of the rent paid by the tenant. Example: Rent = \$525, 30% of \$721 (SSI payment) = \$216(Tenant Portion). \$525-\$216=\$309(Portion MFP pays).

Landlords will send a monthly invoice to MFP directly and must submit a W9.

Invoices will be billed to:

SLTC- MFP
Housing Bridge Assistance
PO Box 4210
Helena, MT 59604

- The property owner and /or landlord are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the facility.
- Properties eligible for Rental Assistance must be located within the state of Montana.